

By Joyce Grant February 1, 2012 [Link](#)

On January 24 Congressman Kevin McCarthy, stated that he supports an extension of a provision that limits the ability of the FAA to enact commercial spaceflight safety regulations. The Commercial Space Launch Amendments Act (CSLAA), legislation passed in 2004, is set to expire in December 2012 and concern is that its expiration may open the way for stifling new regulations that will impede the growth of the \$34 billion commercial space flight industry.

Congressman McCarthy is quoted as expressing that "...unleashing Washington bureaucrats on this industry now could mean the end of private commercial space flight in America before it even gets off the ground." The House version of an FAA reauthorization bill provides for an extension. "Space is really a new frontier. There is a place for government in the infrastructure, but it shouldn't punish us," he said.

On Friday, January 27, 2012 Congressman McCarthy made his 26th visit since he became a member of Congress to the Mojave Air and Space Port to express his support for "space entrepreneurship" and for the teams of top aerospace leaders and companies that CEO Stuart Witt has assembled at the airport.

Space flight companies represented at Friday's gathering included Firestar Engineering, Masten Systems, the National Test Pilot School, Scaled Composites, The Spaceship Company, and XCOR Aerospace, all of whom he met with privately before appearing before representatives from the media. Kern County Second District Supervisor, Zack Scrivner, was also present.

"Regulations based on fear do not work. We must use data and science," the congressman urged. "I am very hopeful about the extension because then we'll have the data... There are struggles here, but there is hope for the future."

Mojave Air and Space Port CEO, Stuart Witt, commented on the phenomenal growth of the airport which has taken it to the world's stage. He pointed out that ten years ago there were only 14 companies and 450 employees at the airport. "Now we have 69 contracts and 2,500 employees report to work here."

CEO Witt introduced David McBride, Center Director for NASA's Dryden Flight Research Center located at Edwards AFB. Describing him as "an example of what one person can do for an organization," he praised the productive partnership that the airport enjoys with Dryden which facilitates the development of new spaceflight capabilities. Director McBride briefly explained Dryden's Flight Opportunities Program, which fosters the development of the commercial reusable suborbital transportation industry. "Advancing science and technologies through flight is our goal at Dryden," he stated.

After the meeting, Congressman McCarthy was given a tour of the construction site at the airport where the manufacture of the largest aircraft ever constructed will take place. Scaled Composites is building the launch aircraft which weighs more than 1.2 million pounds and has a wingspan of over 380 feet. The goal is to create an aircraft-derived system capable of carrying payloads to space, with safety and cost-effectiveness.

"It's exciting coming here," said Congressman McCarthy. "I come to learn."